265

Dr. *WAKE's*

SERMON

AT

S. SEPULCHRES-Church;

Before the

LORD MAYOR, &c.

On Wednesday in Easter-Week, 1690.

UMI

Pilkington Mayor.

Martis xxix° *Aprilis* 1690. *Annoque Regni Regis & Reginæ* Wilhelmi & Mariæ *Angliæ, &c. Secundo.*

THis Court doth desire Dr. *Wake* to Print his Sermon Preached on *Wednesday* in *Easter* Week last, before the Lord-Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of *London*, at St. *Sepulchres*.

Wagstaffe.

A

SERMON

Preach'd before the

LORD-MAYOR,

AND

Court of Aldermen,

AT

S. *SEPULCHRES*-Church,

ON

Wednesday in EASTER-Week,

A. D. M. DC. XC.

By *WILLIAM WAKE*, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to Their Majesties: And Preacher to the Honourable Society of *GRAYS-INN.*

LONDON:

Printed for **Ric. Chiswell** at the *Rose* and *Crown* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard: And **W. Rogers** at the *Sun* over-against St. *Dunstan's* Church in *Fleetstreet.* 1690.

UMI

GAL. VI. 10.

As we have therefore Opportunity, let us do Good unto all Men, especially unto them that are of the Houshold of Faith.

SAINT *Paul* having in the foregoing parts of this *Epistle* dispatch'd that *Subject* which was the Great Occasion of his writing of it; and endeavour'd by many Arguments to perswade *the Galatians* not to suffer themselves to be mislead by those False-Teachers who were crept in amongst them, into a needless, and even dangerous mixture, of the *Law* of *Moses* together with the *Gospel of Christ*: Goes on in the *Close* of all, to exhort them to such *Practical Duties* as he thought most necessary to recommend to them in those Circumstances in which they then were.

It was the unhappiness of that *Church*, as it generally is of all Others in the like *Cases*, that their *diversity* of *Opinion*, as to the Point before-mention'd, had set up a *diversity* of *Parties* and *Interests* amongst them; and made them much more zealous for their own *particular Tenents*, in which they differ'd from one another, than for *the Common Faith and Doctrine of Christ*, in which they agreed together. Instead of *glorifying God* by a *Holy Life*, their business was to *tear* and *worry one another* about the *Ceremonies* of the *Law* of *Moses*. Religion was turn'd into Disputing; And he was accounted the best man, not who was the most careful to *live quietly*, and to *do his duty conscientiously*, but who was the most violent to *defend* his *Point*, and to *run down* all those that were of a *different Perswasion*. Gal. v. 15.

In opposition to this furious and contentious Spirit,

Saint *Paul* having firſt determined the *Point* which occaſion'd all their difference, goes on finally to ſtir them up to ſuch *Duties*, as he ſuppoſed would be moſt likely to reduce them to a *Chriſtian Temper* of *Love* and *Charity* to one another.

And 1*ſt*, Since the *Law* was that they were ſo zealous for, he deſires them to reflect a little, what it was that the *Law* its ſelf commanded them, Ch. v. 14. *For all the* law *is*
Verſe 14. *fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou ſhalt* love *thy neighbour as thy ſelf.*

2*dly*, He repreſents to them, what the *preſent Conſequence* of ſuch *Contentions* would be likely to be: That while they thus quarrell'd with one another, they would give a fair opportunity to the common Enemy to deſtroy
Ch. v. 15. them all, v. 15. *But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not conſumed one of another.*

V. 16, 19, 20, &c. 3*dly*, He bids them conſider, that *Hatred*, *Variance*, *Emulation*, *Striſe*, *Seditions*, *Hereſies*, *Envyings*, and ſuch like; how fair ſoever the pretence may be of a concern for the *Honour of God*, and the *Intereſts* of *Religion*, are yet as much the *Works of the Fleſh*, and as deſtructive of Salvation, as *Adultery* or *Drunkenneſs*, or any other the like Immoralities. And that, if they would approve themſelves truly zealous in his Service, they muſt do it by a quite contrary Practice:
Ch. v. 22, 23, 24, 25. By their *Love*, *Peace*, *Long-ſuffering*, *Gentleneſs*, *Goodneſs*, *Meekneſs*, and the like *Fruits* of that bleſſed *Spirit*, which evermore leads Men to be kind and charitable to one another.

And having thus given them theſe *General Cautions*, he finally adds two or three *particular Directions* in ſuch *Inſtances*, wherein they ſeemed more eſpecially to ſtand in need of his Advice.

As *Firſt*, That they ſhould not ſuffer their *differences* ſo far to tranſport them, as to make them be perpetually *quarrelling*

relling and *diſputing* with one another. For that this would be a means rather to keep up their differences, and embitter their Spirits, and ſet them farther from Agreement, than conduce to the compoſing of them, v. 26. *Let us not be deſirous of vain-glory, provoking one another, envying one another.* Ch. v. 26.

Secondly, That much leſs ſhould they indulge a peeviſh Temper ſo far, as to be glad of any occaſion to expoſe one anothers *Sins* and *Infirmities*; but rather ſhould mutually endeavour to help, and *bear one anothers burdens*: And conſider, that the beſt man in the World may ſome time or other be *tempted*, and *overtaken in a fault*, and ſo need the ſame *Charity*. Chap. vi. Verſe 1, 2.

To this end, *Thirdly*, That they ſhould learn to be *Humble*: And inſtead of comparing themſelves with other men, and valuing themſelves upon their being *Better* or more *Orthodox* than their Neighbours, ſhould examine themſelves by the *Rule* of their *Duty*, and ſee how they ſtood with relation to that: And remember, that when we come before *God* in *Judgment*, the Enquiry will not be, whether we have not exceeded ſome others in our Piety, but whether we have liv'd ſo as we our ſelves might and ought to have done, v. 5. *For every man ſhall bear his own burden.* Verſe 3.

Fourthly and laſtly, That above all, they ſhould not ſuffer their *differences* in other things, to abate their *Charity*, or make them ever the leſs ready in all *Good Offices*, whether to their *Teachers*, or to *one another*. But ſhould conſider, that the Time is coming when God will call us to *give an account of our ſtewardſhip*; how we have employed thoſe *Talents* he has committed to us. And then they who have been ſo wiſe as to manage them as they ought to do, ſhall receive a *Bleſſed Reward*: Whilſt thoſe who have minded only their Luſts or their Intereſts; who have either hoarded up their *Riches* without *doing* any *Good* at all with them, or have Vſs. 6, 7, 8, 9.

ſpent

ſpent them only in *Sin* and *Extravagance*, ſhall be condemn'd to a miſerable ſtate of *Everlaſting Puniſhment*: From whence he concludes in the Words of the *Text*;

As we have therefore Opportunity, *let us* do good *unto* all *men, eſpecially unto them who are of the* houſhold of Faith.

From which Words I ſhall take Occaſion to diſcourſe on theſe Four *Points*:

I^ſt. Of that *general obligation* which our *Chriſtian Profeſſion* lays upon us to DO GOOD: *As we have therefore opportunity, let us* Do Good.

II^dly. Of the *Time* and *Meaſure*, *When* and *How far* we ought ſo to do; ὡς καιρὸν ἔχομεν. *As we have Opportunity; According to our* Ability; for ſo alſo that Phraſe may well enough be underſtood.

III^dly. Of the *Perſons* to whom this *Good* is to *be Done*; to *All men, eſpecially to them that are of the* houſhold of Faith.

IV^thly. Of the great Engagement we have to do this, expreſs'd in the *verſe* before, from which our *Text* is the Inference: *Let us not be weary in* well-doing, *for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not; As we have* therefore *Opportunity, let us do* Good *unto All men, eſpecially unto them that are of the* houſhold of Faith.

I begin with the *Firſt* of theſe;

I^ſt. The *general obligation* which our Religion lays upon us to *Do Good*.

For the better clearing whereof, I muſt obſerve, That the *word* in the *Original* is very *emphatical*; it ſignifies not barely the *doing good*, but implies a care and choice in the *Doing*

Doing of it; that we ſhould do, τὸ ἀγαθὸν, *the Good* that particular *Good*, whatſoever it be which another wants, and wherein we may be capable of lending our aſſiſtance to him.

Charity is a duty as *comprehenſive* as it is *excellent*: It extends its ſelf to all ſorts of *Good Offices* whereby we may at any time be able to ſerve our neighbour, and do any real act of kindneſs to him. And indeed ſince God deſigned that to *Do Good* ſhould be the indiſpenſable *duty* of *all Chriſtians*, it was but neceſſary to give ſuch a Latitude to it, that no Chriſtian whatſoever might have juſt cauſe to complain that he was not in a capacity, in ſome way or other, of fulfilling it.

To run through all the ſeveral *parts* of this *duty*, and ſhew in how many Inſtances one man may be capable of *Doing Good* to another, were an undertaking as difficult and infinite, as it would be to draw a *Scheme* of all the *Miſeries* and the *Calamities*, of all the *Wants* and the *Neceſſities*, which any man ever did, or ever ſhall fall into in this world. Suffice it in general to ſay, That by whatſoever *Act* of ours we do in any wiſe promote either the *preſent Welfare*, or the *Eternal Happineſs* of our neighbour; do in any ſort contribute to make him more eaſie or comfortable in *this life*, or to further his everlaſting felicity in *the other*; in that we diſcharge this *Duty* of *Doing Good* to him, and which there is no man ſo mean or low in the World, but he may find frequent *Opportunities* of putting in practice.

But tho this therefore be the general import of *Doing good*, and the undoubted *duty* of every Chriſtian; yet if we conſider that expreſſion according to the *ſtile* of the *holy Scriptures*, we ſhall find it commonly uſed there in a more *limited ſenſe*, to ſignifie that particular kind of * *Doing Good*, which conſiſts in *acts* of *Mercy* and *Beneficence*.

And ſo I conceive it is that we are in a more eſpecial manner at leaſt, to underſtand it in this place: And then

* Act. x. 38. —ix. 36. 2 Cor. ix. 8. 2 Theſſal. iii. 13. 1 Tim. v. 10. Ib. vi. 18. Tit. iii. 8, 14. Heb. xiii. 16, &c.

See Chryſ. in Loc.

taking this for the meaning of our *Apoſtle* in theſe *words*, I ſhall not need ſay much to ſhew what clear and forcible obligations our Religion has laid upon us, in this *ſenſe* more particularly, to *Do Good*. In ſhort,

[a] Mat. vi. 19. —xix. 21. Luk. vi. 30. —xi. 41. —xii. 33. Rom. xii. 13. 2 Cor. viii. 7. Coloſ. iii. 12, &c.

*If to have given the plaineſt and moſt expreſs *Commands* for the *exerciſe* of ſuch a *Charity*, and to have repeated thoſe *Commands* more frequently, and to have enforced them more earneſtly, than almoſt any other *Precepts* in the Goſpel beſides [a]:

[b] Mat. v. 48. *comp. with* S. Luk. vi. 36. † Prov. xix. 17.

*[b] If to have ſet before us the *Practice* of it, as that whereby above all things we may the moſt nearly imitate the *Perfection* of God himſelf; † and render him our debtor from whom we have received all, whatſoever we enjoy:

1 Jo. iii. 6. —iv. 12, 20, 21.

*If to have made our *Kindneſs* and *Charity* to our *Neighbour*, the very mark whereby to try our *Love* and *Duty* to *God*; and to have declared that no ſervice we can do the One, ſhall be accepted, whilſt we continue to neglect the Other. But above all,

See below, iv. Point.

*If not only to have promiſed the *Bleſſings* of *this life* to the practice of it, but to have ſet forth to us the great and final Inqueſt of the *Day of Judgment*, as depending in a manner entirely on this one thing, and entailing either *Eternal Happineſs*, or *Eternal Miſery* upon us in the other World, according as we have been *Charitable* or not, in this:

If, I ſay, all this may be thought ſufficient to lay an obligation upon us to be very diligent and forward in the diſcharge of any *Duty*, there is then none to which our *Religion* has been more careful to excite and oblige us than this *one* of *Charity*, nor in which therefore a *Chriſtian* will be leſs able to excuſe himſelf, if after all this he ſhall ſtill continue to neglect the performance of it.

But of the *Obligations* which we lie under thus to *Do Good*, I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak more fully in the *Cloſe* of this Diſcourſe: In the mean time having thus pointed out

out to you what that *Good* is I am now more particularly to recommend to your practice, and given you a general Proſpect of our concern in it, I ſhall go on to the *ſecond Thing* which I propoſed to conſider,

II^dly. Of the *Time* and *Meaſure*, When and How far it is our *Duty* to *Do this good*; *As we have Opportunity*; *According to our Ability.*

I have before ſaid, that the Phraſe of St. *Paul* would well enough bear each of theſe Interpretations; and I ſhall rather chuſe both, than prefer either. They Both agree very well with the deſign of the *Text*, and will either of them afford ſome Uſeful and Seaſonable reflections to us, to direct our Practice in the *Duty* of it.

And 1^ſt. Of the *Time*, the *Seaſon* of *Doing Good.*

It has been the general Sence of the moſt Ancient *Interpreters* of this paſſage, to refer the *Opportunity* here ſpoken of to the *Time of our preſent life*; as being indeed the only ſpace we have for the Exerciſe of ſuch a *Charity.* And accordingly the * *Learned Tranſlations*, departing a little from the ſtrictneſs of the *Greek Original*, have moſt of them render'd it not as we have here done, *As we have therefore opportunity*: But as it ſtill ſtands in our *Liturgy*, Now while *we have Time*, *let us Do Good unto all men.* And thus it will agree very well with the Reſt of the *Context*; where the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks of two different *ſeaſons*, the *One* of *ſowing*, the *Other* of *harveſt*; and *Exhorts* the *Galatians* not to neglect to *ſow now*, and then they ſhall be ſure to *reap hereafter.*

See Chryſ. Hieron, &c. in loc.

* Vulg. Lat. Syriac. Arab.

Communion Serv. Vs^s. 7, 8.

—9.

And indeed this is a Remark, than which none can be more proper for our ſerious Conſideration. It has pleaſed *God* to ſend us into this World, to exerciſe our ſelves, and to prepare our Souls for the Happineſs of the Other. Here therefore is the *Time* of *Labour*; the fatal *ſeaſon* that muſt render us either *Happy* or *Miſerable* to all *Eternity.* And

I am ſure, I need not tell you either how ſhort, or how uncertain at the beſt this *Time* is. Our years run on apace; whilſt we are diſcourſing of it we draw nigher to the Grave. Every *minute* cuts off ſome portion of our Life; and we cannot tell how ſoon *death* may overtake us, and deprive us of it all at once. And certainly then we ought to eſteem it a very ſeaſonable Admonition, which the *Apoſtle* here gives us, *preſently, whilſt we have* yet the *Opportunity, to Do Good*, ſeeing we cannot tell how little a ſpace we may have left us for the *doing* of it.

It is the folly of a great part of the World, that in this, as well as in too many other Inſtances of their *Duty*, they love ſtill to Procraſtinate, and put off the *doing* of it as long as ever they can. They will *Repent* when they are *Dying*, and be *Charitable* when they are *Dead*: But will rather run the hazard of their Souls to all Eternity, than part either with their *Sins* or their *Money* before needs they muſt. And truly for thoſe of the *Other Communion*, who believe that a little *Sorrow* and *Confeſſion* at the laſt, is enough to diſcharge them of all the *Guilt* of their *Sins*; and that by a *Good Legacy* left to the *Church*, for *Prayers* and *Maſſes* to be ſaid for them, they ſhall ſoon get quit of the *Puniſhment* of them too; What wonder if they reſerve both their *Riches* and their *Repentance*, for ſo *Seaſonable a Time*, and *ſo Good an Occaſion?* But for men who ſee through theſe deluſions, and ſmile at ſuch Bargains, and wonder how any *Chriſtians* can ſuffer themſelves to be ſo groſly cheated in a matter of ſo much concernment, as their *Money* commonly *is* to *moſt*, and as our *Souls* certainly *ought to* be to *all* of us; nevertheleſs ſtill to delay their *doing Good*, and neglect the *Opportunity*, and leave the iſſue of all to a *death-bed Repentance*, and a *death-bed Charity*: What can we conclude but that ſuch perſons as theſe, muſt have too great an affection both for their *Riches* and for their *Luſts*; and that could

theſe

these Men have lived for Ever, they would never have thought of being either *Charitable* or *Religious*?

Indeed for those who have been *Liberal* and *Bountiful* before, to *finish* their *Race* with *Glory*; and adorn their *Death*, with the same Charity that had given a *Luster* and *Ornament* to them whilst they *Lived*; This is so far from being worthy of any Censure, that it ought rather to make their Memory precious to all future Generations. But otherwise to tarry to the last hour, and never think of *doing Good* to *others* with the Portion which God has Given us, till we are no longer in a condition to enjoy it our selves; this must certainly be very *Sinful* and *Scandalous*: And tho I will not say that such a *Legacy*, rather than *Charity*, at the last, shall utterly lose its Reward; Yet as it wants much of that Praise which the *Early giver* meets with among *Men*, so I think it may be justly doubted whether it shall find so Favourable an Acceptance in the sight of *God*.

But (2dly.) This *Phrase*, *As we have Opportunity*, will admit of yet another consideration, and that more Agreeable to our litteral translation of it, *viz. When ever a fitting Occasion presents its self, and we are in a Condition of doing* of it. Not that we should suppose it to be our *Duty*, to give to every one indifferently that shall ask of us, and in the usual *dialect* of the *streets*, abuse the Sacred *Name* of *Christ*, to cover over their own *Idleness* and *Undeserving*. There is a *Prudence* to be used in the *Distribution* of our *Charity*, as well as a *Liberality* to be shewn in the *proportion* of it. And St. * *Paul* himself has told us there are some, who *If they will not work, neither let them eat*. But that whenever a true and worthy Object of *Charity* presents its self to us, we should then embrace the *Occasion*; and look upon it that this is the *Opportunity* in which if we are able, we ought to *do Good*.

* 2 Thes. iii. 10. ἡ ἐλεημοσύνη ἐκείνοις δέδοτο μόνοις, τοῖς οὐκ ἰσχύουσιν ἐκ τῆς τῶν χειρῶν ἐργασίας ἐπαρκέσαι ἑαυτοῖς. in loc. p. 394. E.

Nay

Nay but yet farther, (3dly.) Tho it be moſt certain in the General, that whenever a fitting *Object* of *Charity* calls upon us for our relief, we ought, if we are in a Condition, to lay hold on the *Opportunity* to *do Good*: yet ſome Special *Seaſons* and *Occaſions* there are, which will in a particular manner deſerve to be look'd upon as the *proper Times* for this *Duty*.

Such are 1ſt. The *Times of Want* and *Scarceneſs:* Whether it happens by the Hand of God, or through the Sins and Violence of men; Whether by ſome *dearth* or *famine* in the Land, or by the miſeries of *War* and *Tumults*; the Obſtruction of *Commerce* abroad, and the natural conſequence of that, the *Decay* of *Trade* at home. In theſe and the like Caſes, the more the *Neceſſities* of the *poor* encreaſe, the greater ſhould be our care and concern to relieve them: And we muſt not think, that an *ordinary Charity* will excuſe us, when ſuch *Accidents* and *Calamities* as theſe, call for an *extraordinary bounty* from us.

But eſpecially, 2dly. Such is the *Time* of *Tryals* and *Perſecutions for righteouſneſs ſake*: When it pleaſes God, whoſe Judgments are unſearchable, to expoſe (as many times he does) his own *Church* and *Servants*, to *ſuffer* for their *Faith*, and a *good Conſcience*; being *perſecuted in one City or Country, to fly into another:* And thereby at the ſame time, that he does them the *honour* of making them *Confeſſors* for their *Religion*, offers us the *Benefit*, of being in ſome meaſure *Partakers* with them in their *Afflictions*; by our careful proviſion for, and our generous reception of them.

It was this conſideration eſpecially, that open'd ſo far the hearts of the *firſt Converts* to *Chriſtianity* towards one another, that they accounted nothing they had their own; but were even glad of the opportunity to do ſomewhat extraordinary in teſtimony of their *Love* to thoſe, who ſhew'd

ſhew'd ſo much *Love* and *Conſtancy* to their Bleſſed *Maſter*. And ſure we ought in ſome meaſure to imitate the *Primitive Charity* of thoſe Men, at a time when ſo many of our *Brethren* have follow'd their *Example*, in a *Primitive zeal*, and *firmneſs* to their *Religion*.

This is the leaſt return we can make to *God*, for the Peace and Tranquility we hitherto enjoy, when ſo many *Thouſands* have been expoſed to ruin for that *Faith*, which we count it our *Glory* and *Happineſs* to profeſs. And certainly we ought to conſider, if the *ſtorm* ſhould have broken firſt upon us, what we ſhould have in that *caſe* expected from them, and let that inform us what we ought to do for them.

And theſe are ſuch *Opportunities*, as the Neceſſities of Others make for us: There are yet many *ſpecial Occaſions* for *Doing Good* which our *own circumſtances* will offer to us.

So, 3*dly*. In the *Times* of our *Happineſs* and *Proſperity*: When *God* does in any extraordinary manner give a *Bleſſing* to us, whether in our *Perſons* or in our *Affairs*; Whether in our own *Private concerns* only, or in the more *General* and *Publick welfare* of our *Friends* or *Country*. Theſe are ſuch *Times* in which not only our own *Reaſon*, and the *Common Practice* of *Mankind*, but even *God* himſelf has directed us to make our *Charity* to *Others*, one way of expreſſing our *Grateful acknowledgments* to *Him*: That whilſt we rejoyce in the effects of his Mercy to us, our Brethren may find Cauſe to joyn thanks with us, for the Liberal expreſſions of our Love and Kindneſs to them. And therefore when God Commanded the *Iſraelites* in three *Solemn Feaſts* every year, to keep up the Memory of the *Bleſſings* he had done for them in bringing them up out of *Egypt*, and planting them in that *Good land* which they poſſeſſed; He took particular care that the *Poor* ſhould not be forgot by them; *Deut*. xvi. 11, 14 *Thou ſhalt*, ſays

ſays he, *rejoyce before the* LORD: Thou, *and thy* Son, *and thy* Daughter, *and thy* Man-ſervant, *and thy* Maid-ſervant, *and the* Levite, *and the* Stranger, *and the* Fatherleſs, *and the* Widow, *that are within thy gates.* For which end there was a *Publick Collection* always to be made at thoſe *Feaſts*; v. 16. 17. *Three times in a year ſhall all thy Males appear before* the LORD, *in the place which he ſhall chuſe, in the feaſt of unleavened bread, and in the feaſt of weeks, and in the feaſt of Tabernacles; They ſhall not appear before the* LORD Empty. *Every man ſhall* give, *according to the Bleſſing of the* LORD *thy God, which he hath* given thee.

And not only if we have already received any Signal *Bleſſings* and *Deliverances* from *God*; But 4*thly*, When we would implore his Favour for *Future Mercies*; Whether to *deliver* us from any *Evils* or *Calamities* which either our *Sins have deſerved*, or we may otherwiſe have juſt Cauſe to fear are ready to fall upon us; Or elſe to ſend down ſome *new Bleſſings* upon us, or to *continue*, or to *perfect* thoſe we have aleardy received: In all theſe, and the like Caſes, there is nothing can more effectually *appeaſe God's Anger*, and *enliven our Prayers*, and make our Piety and our *Repentance acceptable* in his ſight, and ſo obtain thoſe Mercies which we deſire from him; than to accompany all our other Service, with ſome extraordinary *Acts* of *Charity*, and thereby give a new Force, and Vigour to it.

When *Daniel* had interpreted *Nebuchadnezzar's dream*, and therein diſcover'd to him the *ſtrange Judgment* which *God* was about to bring upon him: How he ſhould be *driven from men, and have his dwelling with the Beaſts of the field, and be made to eat graſs as the Oxen, and be wet with the dew of Heaven*; The beſt Advice he could give him to ſtay the hand of *God*, and prevent the *Evil* that was denounced againſt him, was to do ſome extraordinary

Act

Act of *Mercy* and *Charity* to others, if perhaps he might thereby escape that Great Evil which was denounced against himself: *ver.* 27. *Wherefore,* —— 27. says he, *O King, let my counsel be acceptable unto Thee; and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine Iniquities by* shewing mercy *to the* poor; *If it may be a lengthning to thy Tranquillity.* And it was the Opinion of St. *Jerome,* That *Nebuchadnezzar* did accordingly take the Holy Prophet's Advice; and that 'tis to this we are to ascribe the delay which we read was made of this *Judgment,* for * one *whole year*; till forgetting his danger, and returning again to his former course, he forfeited the continuance of that *Tranquillity,* which God had been pleased to *lengthen* to him upon the account of his *Repentance* and *Charity.*

Hieronym. in Dan. c. IV. *L. H. Edit. Erasm.*

* Dan. IV. 29.

But, *Fifthly,* And to conclude this Point: We ought to esteem not only such *extraordinary seasons* as these to be in a more peculiar manner the *proper Times* for this *duty*; But in general, Whenever either our *own Piety,* or *publick Authority* shall engage us to any *especial,* and *singular Exercises* of *Religion*; In all these *Cases,* and upon all such *Occasions,* still our *Prayers,* our *Thanksgivings,* our *Repentance,* whatever our *Devotion* be, it must ever-more be accompanied with some Expressions of our *Bounty* too; And our *Charity* to our *Neighbour,* be the constant companion of our *Piety* towards *God.*

It was this that made the devout *Prayers* of *Cornelius,* though a *Gentile,* so acceptable unto him, that he sent down an *Angel* from *Heaven* on purpose to assure him of it, and to direct him in the way for a

Chrys. in Act. Hom. X. p. 210. *A.*

better underſtanding of his *Duty*: *Thy Prayers,*
Act. X. 4. ſays he, *and thine* Alms, *are come up for a memorial before God.* And 'tis to the neglect of this, that we may, among other things, I fear, impute it; that we now too often ſeem to lift up our
Prov. XXI. 13 Hearts in vain thither. I am ſure the *Wiſeman* has told us, That *whoſo ſtoppeth his Ears at the cry of the Poor, he alſo ſhall cry himſelf, and ſhall not be heard,* And when the *Iſraelites* heretofore complained, with ſome Amazement, of the ineffectualneſs of all their *Faſting* and *Prayers* to implore *God's* favour; And wonder'd what the meaning of it ſhould be, that all their *Crys* and their
Iſaiah LVIII. 3. *Humiliations* ſtood them in no ſtead, *Iſaiah* LVIII: 3. *Wherefore have we faſted, and thou ſeeſt not? Wherefore have we* afflicted our Souls, *and thou takeſt no knowledge?* Nay, and this at the ſame time that *God* ſeems to bear witneſs to their
Ibid. ver. 2. *Piety* in other reſpects, *ver.* 2. *Yet they ſeek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a Nation that did righteouſneſs, and* forſook *not the Ordinance of their God: They ask of me the Ordinances of juſtice, they take delight in approaching to God:* The Prophet plainly tells them where the fault lay; They were at *Variance* among *themſelves*, and *uncharitable* to the *Poor*, and this ſpoiled all their o-
Ver. 4. ther Piety; *Behold*, ſays he, *ye* faſt *for ſtrife and*
—— 5. *debate: Is it ſuch a* Faſt *that I have choſen? A day for a man to afflict his ſoul? Wilt thou call this a*
—— 6. Faſt, *and an acceptable day to the* LORD? *Is not this the* Faſt *that I have choſen, to looſe the bands of Wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let*
—— 7. *the Oppreſſed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy Bread to the hungry and that*

thou

thou bring the poor that are caſt out, to thy Houſe? When thou ſeeſt the naked that thou cover him, —— 8. *and that thou hide not thy ſelf from thine own fleſh? Then ſhalt thou call, and the* LORD *ſhall anſwer;* —— 9, &c. *thou ſhalt cry, and he ſhall ſay, Here I am.* &c.

It were an eaſie matter to make a very particular *Application* of every one of theſe *circumſtances* to our ſelves at this *time*; and ſhew that perhaps never any People lay under greater Obligations to a liberal exerciſe of *Charity*, than we of this *Country* do at this day. But I have already enlarged my ſelf too much upon theſe *Reflections*; and muſt not forget that there is yet another meaning which ſome have given to the *phraſe* of my *Text* which I have now been conſidering; and which brings me to the other thing I propoſed in this matter,

2*dly*, Of the *Meaſure* we are to obſerve in our *Doing Good.*

Now that in general is ὡς κατὰ δύναμιν ἔχομεν, *As far as we are able*, and our Capacities will permit us to do it. For ſo we find the word κατὰ ſometimes uſed, not only in the beſt *Greek Authors*, but even in theſe very *Epiſtles*: and particularly *Phil.* IV. 10. where St. *Paul* excuſing the *Philippians* that they did not ſooner ſend their relief to him, tells them they wanted no Good-will ἀλλ' ἠκαιρεῖσθε. *But ye lacked Ability:* (a) ſo the *Syriac* renders it; and ſo * St. *Chryſoſtome*, not to mention any others, expreſly tells us we are there to underſtand it.

(a) *Non Eratis compotes.*

* *Chryſ in Phil. Hom. XV. p.* 135. *E.*

But now what that proportion in particular is, which every one ought to diſtribute in Works of *Mercy* and *Charity*, this is what I ſhall not undertake preciſely to define. Thus much our *Apoſtle* tells us,

that *what a Man ſows, the ſame he ſhall alſo reap*: And that we are to underſtand this not only with Relation to the *kind*, but to the *Meaſure* and the *Proportion* too, himſelf ſhews us, 2 *Cor.* IX. 6. *He which ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly, and he which ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully, every Man according as he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him give, not grudgingly or of neceſſity; for God loveth a chearful giver.* And from both which it is obvious to conclude, that though S. *Paul* would not preſcribe any certain Bounds to Men's *Charity*, which ought to be a *free-will Offering*, large and voluntary, not narrow and conſtrained; yet that in *general* he has plainly enough delivered his Opinion, that the *more* we *give*, the *better* God will *accept* of it; and the greater and more certain ſhall our returns from Heaven be.

2 Cor. IX. 6.

And to a truly *Charitable* mind, there will need no other direction than this. But becauſe ſuch is the narrowneſs of moſt Men's Souls, that they are apt to think every little pittance that they beſtow on *Acts* of *Mercy* to the *Poor*, to be abundantly ſufficient to intitle them not only to an Acceptance, but to a Reward alſo: Though I ſhall not preſume to ſet any bounds where the *Goſpel* has not, by determining what men ought to lay aſide for this *Duty*; yet thus far I will adventure to correct their Miſtakes, as to ſhew what that *proportion* is below which I ſuppoſe Men ought not, without ſome extraordinary Occaſions, to fall; or if they do, may have juſt cauſe to fear that they ſhall be look'd upon by God, as *Unmerciful* and *Uncharitable*.

Now

Now in order hereunto, I ſhall in the *firſt place* take it for granted, that every Man ought to be the more *liberal* in his *Charity* to others, the more *free* and *bountiful* the *Providence* of *God* has been in its *diſtributions* to him. That is to ſay, that our *Charity* muſt bear a proportion to our Abilities, and that to *whomſoever much is given, of him*, in this ſenſe alſo, *much ſhall be required.*

This is what St. *Paul* ſeems to have laid down as the ſtanding rule for the *Corinthians* to proceed by, 1 *Epiſt.* XVI. 2. That every one of them ſhould lay aſide *according as God had proſper'd*, or bleſſed *him*: Which was the very *meaſure* that we before ſaw *Moſes* gave to the *Jews* heretofore; *Deut.* XVI. 17. *Every man ſhall give according to the Bleſſing of the* LORD *thy God which he hath given thee.* And the ſame *Apoſtle*, in his 1ſt *Epiſt.* to *Timothy*, VI. 18. Bids *Timothy charge them that were rich in this world*, not only that they ſhould be *ready to give, and glad to diſtribute*, but that they ſhould *be rich in good works*; *i. e.* ſhould exceed others as much in their *Charity*, as they did in their *Eſtates.*

And from all which it is very plain, that if thoſe to whom God has given a larger *Ability* than others; whoſe *riches* are greater, or whoſe *occaſions* leſs; who have neither ſo many to *maintain now*, nor to *provide for hereafter*; do not in ſome proportion go beyond them in works of *mercy* and *beneficence*: They may juſtly be looked upon to come ſhort of that *Charity God* expects from them, though otherwiſe they ſhould chance to give in a lower and more ſcanty degree.

But *Secondly*, and to come more closely to the *point* proposed. It cannot reasonably be doubted, But that as our *Saviour* himself tells us, that *He came not to* Mat. v. 17. *destroy the Law, but to fulfil it:* So *except our righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the* Scribes *and* —— 20. Pharisees, the strictest and most diligent observers of the *Law*, *We shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* It remains therefore, that though the *Gospel* of *Christ*, has not particularly defined what *proportion* every man should give in works of *Charity*, yet that no *Christians* ought to give less now, than what the *Jews* heretofore were ordinarily obliged to do.

[a] Deut. xiv. 28. xxvi. 12. [b] Levit. xix. 9, 10. Ib. xxiii. 22. [c] Exod. xxii. 25. Levitic. xxv. 35, 36. Deut xxiii. 19 [d] Deut. xxiv. 19. [e] Levit. xix. 19. Deut. xxiv. 19. [f] See Deut. xxiv. 14. &c.

Now the *proportion* of the *Law* was this. [a] That every third *year* they should set aside the *tenth part* of their yearly income for the *use* of the *poor*: [b] That they should permit them every *Harvest* to *lease* in *their fields*; [c] That they should lend to them without *Usury*; [d] That they should not go over their *Fields*, their *Vineyards*, or their *Olive-yards* a second time to gather them clean; or if they left any *sheaf*, or *clusters*, or *bunches* behind, that they should not go back to fetch them, but should leave all that escaped their first Gathering, together with a certain [e] *Part* of each field, which they called the *Corner of the field*, untouch'd, *for the Stranger, for the Fatherless, and for the Widow*; besides some other *Instances* of the like kind, prescribed to them [f].

This was the *Jew's righteousness*, that is, his *duty*, his *obligation*: And if he transgress'd in any thing of all this, he *broke* the *Law*, and *sinned* against *God*. But they had *Acts* of *Charity* yet beyond this, and which they properly called by the Names of *Mercy* and *Bounty*. Such were all their *Voluntary Offerings* at

at their *Feaſts* before mention'd: All their *Occaſional works* of *pity*, upon extraordinary Emergencies: If for example *God* had given them a greater increaſe than ordinary in their *fields* or their *Vineyards*; or they had met with any unexpected *Good ſucceſs* in their Affairs: If their *Children* and their *Flocks* were multiplied unto them; or elſe on the other hand, ſome greater *ſin* was to be expiated, or ſome *Calamity* to be prevented, which ſeem'd ready to come upon them, unleſs they took care, by ſome extraordinary *Acts* of *Charity* and *Repentance*, to prevent the evil, and reconcile themſelves to *God*.

Such was the meaſure of the *Jews Charity* under the *Law*, and certainly the *Chriſtians* ought not to be leſs. And therefore tho' I ſhall not pretend to determine what every man ought to do in this particular, and indeed amidſt the great variety of *Fortunes* and *Circumſtances* in the World, could not well give any certain rules for this matter; yet thus much I am perſwaded we may conclude. That no *Chriſtian* can ordinarily excuſe himſelf, who does not lay aſide ſomewhat more than the *thirtieth part* of his yearly income for the *Stranger*, for the *Fatherleſs*, and for the *Widow*, beſides all *Occaſional Acts* of *Charity* on extraordinary Emergencies; which was the leaſt that *God* required of the *Jews* heretofore, and is, I believe, the leaſt that any *Chriſtian* can reaſonably preſume ſhall be expected of him now. See *Dr. Hammond's* Pract. Cat. l. 3. Sect. 1.

And as we may juſtly ſuppoſe this to be the very *loweſt degree* that is fit to be mention'd among Chriſtians for the *ordinary* diſcharge of this *duty*. So, *Thirdly*, On *extraordinary Occaſions*, ſuch as thoſe we before laid down, 'tis certain, that this will by no means ſuffice. Here we muſt ſet no *bounds* to our

doing

doing Good, but what our want of *Ability*, or *Opportunity* preſcribes to us. *Charity* indeed does not only allow, but oblige us firſt to *provide for our own*: And when that is prudently and moderately done, what further remains, tho' it be ours, yet it is ours only in truſt for the ſupply of the *wants* and *neceſſities* of our Neighbours. And if the Exigences of the Poor be great, and they cannot otherwiſe be ſupplied, we muſt reſolve rather to part with all that we can ſpare, than to ſee them languiſh and periſh for want of it. And woe be to that man who indulges either his *Covetouſneſs* or his *Vanity* with that, for the lack of which his poor Brother periſhes! What our Saviour once pronounced againſt the *rich Man* in St. *Luke*, ſhall become his Sentence; *Son, remember that thou in thy life-time haſt received thy Good things, and likewiſe Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted and thou art tormented.*

Chryſ. de Lazar. conc. 2. p. 50. C. D. Edit. Par. Gr. Lat.

Luke x. 25.

And this may ſuffice for our *ſecond point*, of the *Time* and *Meaſure* of our *doing Good*. Let us conſider

IIIdly. To what *Perſons* we are to do this; to *All Men, Eſpecially unto them that are of the Houſhold of Faith.*

1ſt. We muſt *do Good* unto *All Men.*

Chryſ. in Loc.

It was the Opinion of St. *Chryſoſtome*, that St. *Paul* deſign'd this part of my *Text* to be a reproach to the narrow-ſpirited Temper of the *Jews*; who confined the greateſt part of their *Charity* to ſuch as were of the *ſame Country*, or at leaſt of the *ſame Religion* with themſelves, and to raiſe us up to a more generous and extenſive practice of it.

'Tis

'Tis true we find ſeveral Paſſages in the *Law* directing them to a concern not only for their *own people*, but alſo for the *ſtrangers* that were amongſt them. So *Levit.* XXV. 35. *If thy Brother be waxen poor and fallen into decay with thee, then ſhalt thou relieve him, yea tho' he be a* Stranger *or a* Sojourner, *that he may live with thee.* And in thoſe particular Precepts, *Deut.* XXIV. there is an expreſs proviſion made for them, at the 19th and following *Verſes: When thou cutteſt down thy* Harveſt *in thy* Field, *& haſt forgot a ſheaf in thy field, thou ſhalt not go again to fetch it; It ſhall be for the* Stranger, *for the* Fatherleſs, *and for the* Widow. *When thou beateſt thine* Olive-Tree *thou ſhalt not go over the Boughs again, it ſhall be for the* Stranger, *for the* Fatherleſs, *and for the* Widow. *When thou gathereſt the* Grapes *of thy* Vineyard, *thou ſhalt not glean it afterwards; It ſhall be for the* Stranger, *for the* Fatherleſs, *and for the* Widow. But as in many other Caſes they were but ill *Interpreters* of the *Law*, ſo we find that in all theſe and the like places, they underſtood by the † *Stranger*, a *Proſelyte*, one that worſhipped the ſame God with them: Or if they chanced to go farther, as in thoſe Inſtances of *Charity* before mentioned, we are told in particular that they did, ſo as to allow the *Gentiles* alſo a part in it; Yet alas! It was but a very ſmall one, *viz.* That they would not hinder them from taking what remained of their *Gleanings* after all their *own poor* had gathered what they thought good; but permit them to carry away that which muſt otherwiſe have been left for the *Beaſts* and *Birds*.

Deut. xxiv. 19. 20. 21.

† *See* Ainſworth *on* Lev. xix. 10. Fagius, Varablus, *on* Exod. xxii. 21. Grotius *on* Levit. xxv. 35.

But the *Chriſtian's Charity* muſt not be diſpenſed by any ſuch ſcanty *Meaſures* as theſe. He muſt *love All men*; and for a proof that he does ſo, he muſt

as he has Opportunity do good unto All men. 'Tis not a *Country*, much leſs a *difference* in *Religion* that muſt ſet bounds to his *Beneficence*. But as God diſpenſes his *Bleſſings* to all the parts of the *Earth* indifferently;

Mat. 5. 44, 45. *Makes his Sun to riſe, and his rain to fall upon the juſt and unjuſt*, upon thoſe who *profeſs* his *true Religion*, and upon thoſe who *perſecute* their *Brethren* for *profeſſing* of it: So muſt the *Chriſtian* follow his *Example*, and be *Merciful as his Father which is in Heaven is merciful.*

Senec. de Benef. l. 1. c. 1.

Luke vi. 36.

Such muſt in general the *Chriſtians Love* and *Beneficence* be: But then as *God* himſelf, though he is *kind* to the *Unthankful* and *Evil*, has yet a particular regard to his *own Servants*; and even amongſt them, does in a more eſpecial manner promiſe to favour ſuch as we are now ſpeaking of, the *Liberal*, and *Charitable Chriſtians* above all others, ſo ought we alſo to do: We muſt, *as we have Opportunity*, Do Good, *unto all men*; But yet

—— 36.

Chryſ. in loc. p. 859. A.

2*ly*, Eſpecially *to them who are of the* Houſhold *of* Faith.

By thoſe *who are of the Houſhold of Faith* we may underſtand, either *firſt*, more largely, *All Chriſtians* in general, who in the *Scripture Phraſe* are often called *God's Houſhold*, Epheſ. II. 19. Or *ſecondly*, more particularly, thoſe of whom the *Apoſtle* was ſpeaking *ver. 6. Let him that is taught in the Word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.* And in which ſoever of theſe *two ſenſes* we take the Expreſſion, the *Rule* of our *Text* will hold good in both: That we ought in a more eſpecial manner to be careful to *do*

Hieron. in loc. D.

Good

Good to them, beyond ſuch others as we are not ſo particularly engaged to.

Nay but, *ſecondly*, and to carry this Reflection yet farther: We may in the exerciſe of our *Charity* not only make a *diſtinction* betwixt *Chriſtians* and *others*, and among them prefer thoſe chiefly who labour in *the word* among us; but ſhould even with reſpect to all others, take care as far as we can to give to thoſe firſt who either the *beſt deſerve*, or at leaſt the *moſt ſtand in need* of our aſſiſtance.

For ſince the largeſt fortune is not enough to enable a man to relieve all; and 'tis certain that not only the *wants* of ſome may be much more urgent than thoſe of others, and ſo more fit to be conſider'd by us; but alſo that there are many, and thoſe commonly the moſt clamorous and importunate, that are utterly unworthy to be regarded by us: He who will *Do Good* with that *prudence* and *diſcretion* he ought to do, muſt take all the care he can to diſtinguiſh between the one and the other of theſe, that ſince he cannot be a *Common Benefactor* to all, he may at leaſt become ſo to them that the moſt deſerve his *Pity*.

See *Ambroſ.* de Offic. l. 2. c. 15.

And, (*1ſt.*) There are many who finding *Begging* not only a more eaſie and agreeable, but ſometimes a more profitable Employment too, not only neglect to *work* themſelves, but even train up their *Children* to the ſame Trade of *Idleneſs*, and of living upon the *Charity* of others. As ſoon as they are *born*, before they can yet ſpeak for themſelves, their *Looks* and *Cries* ſerve for a new Topick to encreaſe the Importunity of their *Parents*: And no ſooner are they able to uſe their *Limbs*, and have attain'd ſo much of *Chriſtianity* as may ſuffice for their purpoſe, to engage the Compaſſion of unwary and good-natur'd

Veniunt validi, vivunt, nullam curam, niſi vagandi, habentes. Nonnemper Impudentiæ locus ſit, &c. Ambroſ. *Ibid.* c. 16.

men, but from thenceforth they are ſet free to ſhift for themſelves, and live as their friends have done before them.

Now, tho' I will not ſay a man *commits* a *Sin* that relieves one of theſe, and do confeſs, that ſometimes he who gives to all, may chance to light on a true *Object* of *Charity* among many that are much otherwiſe; yet certainly it is for the moſt part a good deed miſplac'd: And though I know St. *Chryſoſtome* ſeems to exhort us *to give to all*, upon this conſideration, That ſometimes thereby we ſhall hit aright; yet I can no more believe that the bare *poſſibility* of this ſhould make a man *charitable* without diſtinction, than that the paſſage of St. *Paul*, which he urges for it, ſhould engage us to receive indifferently all that paſs by, into our *Houſes*, becauſe by ſo doing *ſome have entertained Angels unawares.* But,

Chryſ. Hom. in Laz. 2. p. 51. B. C. p. 52. D.

Heb. xiii. 2.

(2*dly*,) There is another ſort of men, who by their *own fault* are reduced to *Poverty*, and are now no longer in a condition to help themſelves, tho' 'tis in a great meaſure owing to their former *ſins* and *neglects* that they are not.

I do not think that ſuch ought wholly to be paſſed by, eſpecially if they are at laſt come to a *due ſenſe* of their *Folly*, and to a *ſerious Repentance* for it. But yet if we have before us *better men*, and as *neceſſitous* as the other; Such as have wrought whilſt they were able, and are now fallen into *Poverty*, becauſe either their Employment fails them, or their *Strength* is gone through *former Labours:* If a decrepit Age has overtaken them, or it may be a *numerous Family* keeps them ſtill under, notwithſtanding all their *Pains* and *Induſtry*; certainly

tainly ſuch perſons as theſe ought firſt to be conſider'd, and take place of thoſe, who have not ſo fair a pretence to our Aſſiſtance.

And this brings me to a (*3d.*) Reflection; and which will yet more direct us in the wiſe diſcharge of this *Duty*. There are many every where *no leſs neceſſitous*, but much *more modeſt*, than the rude and clamorous *Street-Beggar*; Who are fearful and ſcrupulous; Who *mourn in ſecret*, and complain to *GOD* in their Extremities, but cannot tell how to make their Wants known to their *fellow-Chriſtians*. They labour diligently; they neglect no Care to ſupport themſelves, and thoſe for whom they are concerned to provide. But alas! they labour in vain; Either a decay of *Trade*, or it may be unavoidable *Loſſes* in it; *Want of Buſineſs*, *Fire*, *Sickneſs*, a thouſand other *Misfortunes* keep them low and miſerable: They cannot tell how to *ask* our *Charity*, and yet are ready to periſh for want of it.

Videndus eſt ille qui te non videt: Requirendus ille qui erubeſcit videri. Ambroſ. *de Offic. l.* 2. *c.* 15, 16.

Such Men as theſe ought, I do not ſay to be relieved with all chearfulneſs when known, but to be enquired after and found out, that they may be both aſſiſted and encouraged by us. And our *Charity* ſhould deſcend like the *Dew* of *Heaven* upon them; in the moſt ſoft and eaſie, the moſt courteous and obliging manner that is poſſible. We ſhould take care to conſult their *modeſty* as well as their *wants*; and if poſſible not let them know from what hand their help comes, or to whom it is, beſides *God*, they are to return their thanks for it.

The truth is, theſe are a ſort of Men, that do as much deſerve our *Charity*, as the common ſort of *Beggars*, for the moſt part, do our Refuſal. And

if

if it be ſome kind of *Reproach* to our *Country*, that theſe latter are not more ſuppreſſed, and ſet on work; it is certainly a great deal more both our *Sin* and our *Scandal*, that the others ſhould not be more carefully provided for, and encouraged by us.

I ſhall add yet one remark more, (4*thly*) and which will bring me ſtill nearer to the *Command* of my *Text*; *As we have opportunity let us* Do Good *unto* all Men; *eſpecially unto them that are of the* Houſhold *of* Faith.

I have before ſaid, that by thoſe of the *Houſhold of Faith* we might underſtand, either *all Chriſtians in general*; or elſe in *particular*, thoſe who *labour* in the *Word* among us: And I am ſorry I ſhould have any Occaſion to give you a *third meaning* of it, for ſuch *Chriſtians* as are of the ſame *particular Faith* and *Church* with one Another, or have any reflections to offer thereupon to you. But, alas! both our *Diviſions* are too great to be diſſembled at *any Time*, and the Conſequences of them too deplorable, to be utterly paſſed by at ſuch *a Time*, and in ſuch a *Diſcourſe* as this.

We live in an Age, wherein Men's different Opinions in *Points* of *Chriſtian Doctrine*, have ſo far tranſported them, as to make them almoſt utterly forget all the *Meaſures* of *Chriſtian Love* and *Charity* towards one another. I need not tell you how ſad the Effects of a *miſguided Zeal* have been, both in our own and other Countries? What *deſolations* it has wrought? How many thouſands it has *ruined*? What *Wars* and *Diſturbances* it has raiſed, almoſt in all the parts of the Chriſtian World? We have ſeen with our *Eyes*, and it has been

been told unto us, what *Calamities* our *Brethren* have undergone *abroad*: And to what extream Miſeries they are reduced in the midſt of us, no Man can be ignorant, though I fear but few of us lay it ſo effectually to heart as we ought to do. And all this for the ſake of that *Religion* which by the bleſſing of God we yet enjoy in peace and ſecurity.

In ſuch an unhappy ſtate as this; When the *numbers* of our diſtreſſed Brethren are ſo *great*, their *cauſe* ſo *Good*, and their *Wants* ſo *preſſing*; though I would not be ſo uncharitable as to ſay that we ſhould withdraw either our Affection or Aſſiſtance from any *other Chriſtians*, no not from thoſe who have been their *Perſecutors*; yet certainly I may, without abuſing the *Deſign of* my *Text*, ſay thus much; That we ought, in the firſt place, to give to thoſe who are of the ſame *Houſhold of Faith* with our ſelves, before ſuch as do not ſtand in ſo near a Relation to us.

And, bleſſed be God, who has not only hitherto continued his favours to us, it may be, for this very end that we might be able *to miniſter to the neceſſities* of theſe his *Saints*, but has in ſome meaſure opened our *Hearts* too, and made us willing to do it. Only let us take the *Exhortation* of our *Apoſtle* in this place, as well as his *Direction*; and ſince their needs ſtill continue, let us conſider how we may ſtill go on to provide for them; And let *us not be* weary *in* well-doing, *for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.*

Which

Which brings me to the laſt thing propoſed,

IV*thly*, To conſider the great *Engagement* we have to the fulfilling of this *Duty*, in that *Glorious Reward* which God has promiſed to the performance of it.

Among all the *Arguments* which either the *Authority* of *Holy Scripture*, or the *Common principles* of *Reaſon* afford to us, to ſtir us up to the *practice* of this *Duty*, there is none that ſtrikes ſo forcibly upon the minds of all ſorts of Men, as the Conſideration of thoſe *great Bleſſings* which God has promiſed to the diligent performance of it; and of thoſe *ſevere Judgments* which he will one day execute upon thoſe that ſhall continue to neglect and diſregard it. Other reflections may ſerve to convince Men of the *Juſtice* and *Reaſonableneſs* of ſuch a *practice*, and which indeed is ſo very clear that there are few ſo ill-natured and inſenſible as to deny it: But this ſhews the *Neceſſity* of it. Others may force us to confeſs it to be very fitting that we ſhould be thus *kind* and *charitable* to one another: But this ſpeaks with *Authority*, and makes us reſolve in good earneſt ſo to be.

He that tells me how highly reaſonable it is that I ſhould *do* all the *Good* I can with the *portion* which God has given me,* That for this end I have received it, and to this end ought eſpecially to employ it: * That my *riches* are not *my own*, but committed to me in *truſt* for the *Benefit* of *others*, as well as for my *own uſe*; and that I ſhall be *falſe* to that *truſt*, if I *do* no *Good* to others by them: * That I ought

ought to expreſs my *Gratitude* to *God* for his extraordinary Favours to me, by being *Bountiful* to thoſe who have not received ſo large a portion of him: * That this will, above any thing, render me moſt like unto God, and moſt *beloved* of *Men*: * That the pooreſt perſon in the World is yet my Brother, partaker of the ſame *Nature* and *Conſtitution*, it may be of the ſame *Promiſe* of *Grace* too with my ſelf; and therefore that it will be highly, not only *un-Chriſtian*, but even *unnatural* and *inhumane*, not to have ſome *ſenſe* and *feeling* of his *Miſeries:* In a word, * That our *Riches* are very uncertain, and we ſhould conſider, that what is the Condition of many Thouſands now, but lately in as *flouriſhing* an Eſtate as our ſelves, may, for ought we know, the next Year be our own, if *God*, for our *Uncharitableneſs*, ſhall think fit to let us alſo fall into the hands of the ſame *Cruel* and *Mercileſs* men; and therefore that we ought to think what we ſhould judge reaſonable for others in ſuch a Caſe, to *do to us*; and then remember the *Great Rule* both of *Nature* and the *Goſpel*, and *do even ſo unto them*; does certainly ſpeak a great deal of *Senſe*, and may juſtly move my *Aſſent* to his *Arguments*. But 'tis the man who can *draw aſide the Vail*, and ſet *Life* and *Death*, *Bleſſing* and *Curſing* before me; and then make it appear upon ſuch *Grounds* as I cannot *deny*, or even *doubt of*, that my *Happineſs* or *Miſery*, both in *this World* and *the other*, depends upon my *Obſervance* or *Neglect* of this *Duty*, that will awaken all the *Powers* of my *Soul*, and at the ſame time both *convince* and *force* to a *compliance*.

Eccleſ. xi. 1, 2.

Mat. vii. 12.

And ſuch is the *Argument* we have here before us, and from which therefore the *Apoſtle* concludes the *neceſſity* of our *doing Good*, as a matter that would admit of no debate: *Be not*, ſays he, *deceived*; *God is not mocked*: *For whatſoever a man ſoweth, that he ſhall alſo reap. He that ſoweth to his fleſh*, that is, that either ſpends what he has on the *ſenſual Enjoyments* of the *Fleſh*, or elſe hoards it together to the *Covetous* ſatisfying the *deſires* of it, *ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption: But he that ſoweth to the Spirit*, i. e. as the next *Verſes* interpret it, *does good*, makes a *wiſe*, and *pious*, and *charitable* uſe of what he has, *ſhall of the Spirit reap life everlaſting*. Wherefore, *let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due ſeaſon we ſhall reap, if we faint not.*

Many are the *Promiſes* of the like kind which we meet with in other places of *Holy Scripture*: And from all which it is obvious to conclude, that if we have any regard either to our *preſent Happineſs*, or to our *future Glory*, there is nothing wherein we ought to be more careful, than by our *Charity* to eſtabliſh our ſelves in both. For,

1*ſt*. As to this *Preſent Life*.

What is it poſſible for any one to deſire to make him a *happy* man in *this World*, that *God* has not freely promiſed to the *merciful* and *liberal*?

Would he ſecure his *Riches*? Would he confirm the *Enjoyment* of them both to himſelf whilſt he *lives*, and *deliver* them down in *peace* to his *poſterity* when he comes to *dye*? This *Charity* has the promiſe of above any thing beſides: *He that giveth to the poor*, ſays *Solomon*, *ſhall not lack*. And in another place, he gives this as the very reaſon of it, *Prov.* xxii. 9. *He that hath a bounti-*

Prov. xxiii. 27.

Prov. xxii. 9.

ful

ful eye ſhall be bleſſed, for he giveth of his bread to the poor. And holy *David* confirms the truth of this Remark not only from the *Promiſe* of *God*, but alſo from his own *Experience*, *Pſal.* xxxvii. 25. *I have been young, and now am old, yet have I not ſeen the righteous forſaken, nor his ſeed begging their bread.* Pſal. xxxvii. —25. *He is ever merciful and lendeth,* —26. *and his ſeed is bleſſed. For the* LORD *loveth judgment,* —27. *and forſaketh not his ſaints: they are preſerved for ever. But the ſeed of the wicked ſhall be cut off: The righteous ſhall inherit the land, and ſhall dwell therein for ever.* —28.

Nay, but would he do yet more? Would he even *encreaſe* his *Wealth*, and grow more proſperous in the Enjoyment of it? 'Tis a ſtrange Aſſertion, but yet by the Bleſſing and Promiſe of *God*, a very true one, that by giving it thus away, he ſhall encreaſe it. *There is*, ſays *Solomon*, *that ſcattereth, and yet encreaſeth.* Prov. xi. 24. And would you know who that is? He will tell you in the next *Verſe: The liberal ſoul ſhall be made fat, and he that watereth, ſhall be watered alſo himſelf.* —25.

Would he provide himſelf a ſecurity amidſt all the *uncertain*, and many times *miſerable Varieties* of this World? And be ſafe even in the midſt of all its Dangers? *Charity* is the beſt defence, the ſureſt preſervative againſt all *Calamities: Bleſſed is the man*, ſays *David, that conſidereth the poor and needy, the* LORD *will deliver him in the time of trouble.* Pſal. xli. i. *The* LORD *will preſerve him, and keep him alive, and he ſhall be bleſſed upon the earth, and not deliver him into the will of his enemies.* —2.

In ſhort, would he be *bleſſed* in all things that *he putteth his hand unto*, and have every thing proſper according to his hearts deſire? It was the promiſe of God to the *Jews* heretofore, and I ſee no reaſon why we ſhould

not in proportion apply it to our ſelves now, that he would deal with them, according as they did with other men, *Deut.* xv. 7. *If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates, in the land which the* LORD *thy God giveth thee: Thou ſhalt not harden thy heart, nor ſhut thine hand from thy poor brother——Thou ſhalt ſurely give him*; becauſe *that* for this thing *the* LORD *thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all that thou* putteſt thine hand *unto.*

Deut. xv. 7.

——10.

Theſe are ſome of the *preſent Promiſes* which God has made to the *Charitable man.* I might to all this add the ſevere *Threatnings* even of *preſent Evils* to the Covetous Miſer; to him who has no bowels of Mercy towards any others, and therefore deſerves no compaſſion himſelf either from *God* or *Man. He hath ſwallow'd down Riches*, ſays *Job, and he ſhall vomit them up again*; *God ſhall caſt them out of his belly*: and that for this very reaſon, *ver.* 19. *Becauſe he hath oppreſſed and forſaken the poor.*

Job xx. 15.

——19.

But this is yet the leaſt part of this *Argument*, and therefore I will not inſiſt any longer upon it. And indeed the *portion* of the *Croſs*, which every good Chriſtian muſt expect more or leſs to meet with in this world, may often times make theſe *preſent Promiſes* much leſs certain to us now, than they were to the *Jews* heretofore. But the other part of the Conſideration is without Exception, *viz.*

2*dly*, That if *we be not weary in well doing*, then in *due ſeaſon*, when the great day of Retribution comes, *we ſhall* infallibly *reap*, *if we faint not.*

And

And here I ſhall preſume, that no One will ſo far miſtake the meaning of St. *Paul* in theſe words, as to imagine, that this, or any other *Vertue* alone, will be ſufficient to our *Eternal Salvation*: So that if a man does but *give liberally to the poor*, 'tis no great matter how he lives, or what he does with the reſt of his Eſtate. No, this is by no means the meaning of this *Promiſe*. *Charity* is indeed a moſt excellent Vertue, and will go as far, it may be farther towards the ſecuring our *Salvation*, than any One thing beſides in the World. St. *Peter* has told us, that it ſhall *cover the multitude of ſins*: that is, ſhall obtain the forgiveneſs of them. And St. *John* preſcribes it as the beſt means to *aſſure our hearts before God*: that is, to enable us to appear with confidence before him in Judgment. And a Greater than both has told us, that if *we give Alms of ſuch things as we have*, *all things ſhall be clean unto us*. But yet when all is done, neither this, nor any other *Vertue* alone can ſave us. There muſt be an *Univerſal Holineſs* in all other reſpects too, and *without* which *no man ſhall ever ſee the* LORD.

1 Peter iv. 8.
1 John iii. 19.
Luke xi. 41.
Heb. xii. 14.

And yet perhaps even in this *Caſe* alſo, tho by our neglect in other matters we ſhould be ſo unhappy as to come ſhort of *Heaven*, our *Charity* nevertheleſs may not loſe its reward; but may ſerve to make us *leſs miſerable*, if not *more glorious*; to allay our *Damnation*, if not to encreaſe our *Reward*.

But not to purſue theſe Imaginations: That which the *Apoſtle* here promiſes is plainly this; That if we be not wanting to our ſelves, our *Charity* ſhall be ſure to meet with a proportionable *recompence* from *God-Almighty*: and we ſhall *reap* among others, theſe Three great *Advantages* by it *; *Firſt*, That it ſhall prepare the way for the more certain and eaſie *forgiveneſs* of our *ſins*: *Secondly*,

* Prov. x. 12. Dan. iv. 27. 1 Pet. iv. 8.

Acts x. 4. 2 Cor. ix. 14. Hebr. vi. 10. * Mat. xix. 21. Luke xvi. 9. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. 1 Tim. vi. 19, &c.

condly, It ſhall procure us a more large and comfortable portion of *Gods Grace*, to enable us to diſcharge our duty the better now: And *Thirdly*, **If we faint not*, but perſevere in this and all other parts of our *duty*, it ſhall Crown us with a more *exceeding weight of Glory hereafter*. Whilſt the ſordid, covetous Miſer, were it poſſible for him otherwiſe to abound, in all the higheſt perfection of *Chriſtian Piety*, yet for want of this *One Vertue*, ſhall loſe his Reward, and be *caſt out*, with the † *unprofitable Servant*, who *hid his Talent*, and made no uſe of it, *did* no *Good* with it, *into utter darkneſs*, *where is weeping*, *and wailing*, *and gnaſhing of Teeth*.

† Mat. xxv. 25, 30.

And what then remains but that having all theſe Encouragements to ſtir us up to a warm and vigorous diſcharge of this *duty*, we now ſuffer our ſelves to be perſwaded, in the words of our *Saviour Chriſt*, to *provide our ſelves Bags which wax not old*, *a Treaſure in Heaven that faileth not*, *where no Thief approacheth*, *neither Moth corrupteth*. Or as Himſelf elſewhere expreſſes it, with more immediate reference to our laſt conſideration; *To make to our ſelves friends of the Mammon of Unrighteouſneſs*, *that when we fail they may receive us into Everlaſting Habitations*.

Luke xii 33.

Luke xvi. 9.

And yet I cannot conclude without adding one conſideration more, and which I hope may, I am ſure ſhould be of very Great weight with us.

It has been one of the chiefeſt Reproaches which thoſe of the *Church* of *Rome* have endeavoured to fix upon our *Reformed Religion*, that it has not only put a ſtop to *Charity*; but has moreover cut off the very Ground and Foundation of it; and all this only for rejecting thoſe *ſuperſtitions* by which they principally have their Gain.

How

How falſe this *imputation* is as to the latter part of it, we have now pretty largely ſeen. *God* be thanked, *Chriſtianity* affords *Motives* and *Engagements* enough to *Charity*, without running to any vain and ſuperſtitious pretences for the ſupport of it. He who believes the ſingular Efficacy of this *practiſe* both by the *promiſe* of *God*, and through the *prayers* of thoſe whom He relieves to obtain the *forgiveneſs* of his *ſins*, and to deliver his *Soul* from *Eternal damnation*, will need no *Viſion* of *Purgatory* to open his Heart to the *Poor*. He may indeed turn his *Charity* another *way*; inſtead of bartering his *Money* with the *Prieſts* for *Maſſes* and *Prayers*; for *Pardons* and *Indulgences*; for *Holy Trifles* to *prevent* or *expiate Sins*, He may bequeath it to the *Poor* which is a great deal better. And if this be the *Charity* which our *Religion* has put an end to, we ſhall neither be afraid or aſhamed to confeſs it. 2 Cor. ix. 14.

And for the *former*; It might eaſily be made appear, that laying aſide the *Superſtitions* we but now mention'd, there has much more been done ſince the *Reformation* in works of *wiſe* and *true Charity*, than ever was done in twice that time from the firſt *riſe* of *Popery* among us to its going off. And how much ſoever ſome of late have thought fit to *Magnifie* the *Piety* of *Rome* and *Paris*, yet upon theſe *Principles* we may venture to ſay, that in this as well as all other Advantages, our own *City* do's exceed them.

To run through a *particular compariſon* in this point, were both to abuſe your Patience, and the Deſign of this diſcourſe. Let the Account of what has been done in its *publick Hoſpitals* only this *laſt Year* ſerve as a ſhort but ſufficient Evidence whereby to judge with how little reaſon we are tax'd with a *decay of Charity* amongſt us.

A True report, &c.

Such was the Effect of the *laſt Years Piety:* And how much of all this has been *wholly Eſtabliſhed ſince the Reformation*; what vaſt *additions* have been made to what was indeed *begun before*; how faithfully theſe *great Truſts* have been, and are *ſtill adminiſtred*; and kept up not withſtanding the mighty *loſſes* they have ſuſtain'd, and the other frequent *misfortunes* under which they have fallen, is well known to moſt of you in this *Aſſembly*.

Could I to all this Add the ſumm of what in ſuch a doubtful, and diſcouraging Year as this, according to common Eſtimate has been, has nevertheleſs been expended within this *One City* in more *private Acts* of Mercy: What *liberality* has been ſhown in *Collections* twice made for our *Exiled Brethren*, after two before gather'd for our Neighbours of the *French Churches* on the ſame occaſion: Not to mention all other Occurrences, from which no Day, ſcarce any Hour is exempted; We ſhould then have enough not only to *ſilence*, but to *ſhame* the *Cavils* of our *Enemies*, and to engage us to *bleſs God*, who has in ſome meaſure opened our Hearts to the *Cries of the Poor*, and not ſuffer'd them in vain to call upon us.

But yet ſince this is the *Reproach* they would now endeavour to fix upon us; let us be as ready by our Practice to *confute* this, as we have been, with good ſucceſs, by our *Arguments*, to anſwer all their other *Objections* againſt us.

Let us ſhew them, that tho' our *Religion* will neither allow us *to boaſt of* our *Good Works* to *Men*, nor to pretend to *Merit* by them of *God*; yet it teaches

us

us to be no leſs, nay in truth to be much more ſtudious than themſelves in the performance of them.

And the more to engage us to this *Care*, let us often repreſent to our ſelves the *Great Motive* which St. *Paul* has here ſet before us, to ſtir us up to a free and ready Diſcharge of this *Great Duty*.

Let us conſider, that the *Time* is *coming*, when we muſt give a ſtrict account of our ſelves, and of all the *Abilities* and *Opportunities* that we have had of *Doing Good*, and *what Uſe* we have made of them.

That the Enquiry then will not ſo much be what our *Opinions* or *Perſuaſions* were in ſuch or ſuch controverted *Points* of *Chriſtianity*? To what *Church* we have belong'd? or, How well we have determined the many *Queſtions* that ſo fatally *diſtract* and *divide* mens *minds* in *matters* of *Religion*? But rather, How *well* we *have lived*? How *charitable* we have been to thoſe who have differ'd from us? and in particular, How *kind* and *bountiful* to the *Poor* and *Needy*?

This is what our *Saviour* aſſures us, in the Great Account which he has left us of the *day* of *Judgment*. And with which, as being the *nobleſt Argument* that ever was or could have been invented for the *enforcing* of this *duty*, and a ſhort *Summary* of all that I have here been laying before you to excite you to it, I ſhall conclude this whole *Diſcourſe*. St. Mat. XXV.

When the Son of Man *ſhall come in his* Glory, *and all the Holy* Angels *with him, then ſhall he ſit upon the* Throne *of his* Glory. Ver. 31, &c.

And before him ſhall be gathered all Nations, *and he ſhall ſeparate them One from Another, as a* Shepherd *divideth his* Sheep *from the* Goats.

And he ſhall ſet the Sheep *on his* right-hand, *and the* Goats *on his* left.

Ver. 34, &c. *Then ſhall he ſay unto them on his* right-hand: *Come ye* Bleſſed *of my* Father; *inherit the* Kingdom *prepared for you from the foundation of the World. FOR I was an* Hungred, *and ye gave me* Meat; *I was* Thirſty, *and ye gave me* Drink; *I was a* Stranger, *and ye* took me in; Naked, *and ye* cloathed *me*; *I was* Sick, *and ye* viſited *me*; *I was in* Priſon, *and ye* came *unto me.*

Ver. 37, &c. *Then ſhall the* Righteous *anſwer him, ſaying, LORD, when ſaw we thee an* Hungred, *and* fed *thee? or* Thirſty, *and gave thee* Drink? *When ſaw we thee a* Stranger, *and* took *thee in? or* Naked, *and* cloathed *thee? Or when ſaw we thee* Sick *or in* Priſon, *and* came *unto thee? And the* King *ſhall anſwer and ſay unto them; Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my* Brethren, *ye have done it unto me.*

Ver. 41, &c. *Then ſhall he alſo ſay unto them on the* Left-hand; *Depart from me ye* Curſed, *into* everlaſting Fire, *prepared for the* Devil *and his* Angels. *FOR I was an* Hungred, *and ye gave me no* Meat; *I was* Thirſty, *and ye gave me no* Drink; *I was a* Stranger, *and ye* took *me not in*; Naked, *and ye* cloathed *me not*; Sick, *and in* Priſon, *and ye* viſited *me not.*

Ver. 44, &c. *Then ſhall they alſo anſwer him, ſaying, LORD, when ſaw we thee an* Hungred, *or* a-thirſt, *or a* Stranger, *or* Naked, *or* Sick, *or in* Priſon, *and did not* miniſter *unto thee? Then ſhall he anſwer them, ſaying; Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.*

Ver. 46. *And theſe ſhall go away into* Everlaſting Puniſhment, *but the Righteous into* Life Eternal.

FINIS.

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